

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 FPC-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1327

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TAGS: ECON, ENRG, KE, PFOR

SUBJECT: UGANDAN INTERRUPTION OF ELECTRICAL POWER TO KENYA

REF: NAIROBI 7744

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED IMPACT OF UGANDAN ELECTRICAL POWER INTERRUPTION WITH CHIEF PLANNING ENGINEER EAST AFRICAN POWER AND LIGHTING (EAPL), PRINCIPAL GENERATOR AND DISTRIBUTOR IN KENYA. ACCORDING TO HIM, KENYA PURCHASES 20PCT OF ITS AVAILABLE SUPPLY FROM UGANDA, A SHARE WHICH HAS BEEN STEADILY DROPPING SINCE 1973 AS DOMESTIC SOURCES ARE DEVELOPED. TOTAL 1975 SUPPLY FROM UGANDA WAS NEARLY 261,000,000 KWH, ALL FROM OWEN'S DAM COMPLEX NEAR JINJA.

2. SINCE UGANDAN-GENERATED POWER IS FULLY INTEGRATED INTO KENYAN SYSTEM, NO SPECIFIC REGION OR CATEGORY OF CONSUMERS WOULD BEAR BRUNT OF INTERRUPTIONS. ENGINEER SAID KENYA COULD, WITHIN 2 TO 3 HOURS, SWITCH OVER TO DOMESTICALLY GENERATED (THERMAL) POWER TO FILL IN GAP DURING UGANDAN CUTS. (CALTEX REP TRAVELLING IN WESTERN KENYA DURING

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RECENT INTERRUPTIONS REPORTED NO SIGNIFICANT LOCAL BLACKOUTS.)

WHILE TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE, INCREASED POWER SUPPLY THROUGH THERMAL SOURCES WOULD BE COSTLY TO KENYA IN TERMS OF PETROLEUM CONSUMPTION.

3. ENGINEER SEES 1977-78 AS CRITICAL PERIOD IN TERMS OF SATISFYING DOMESTIC DEMAND WITHOUT IMPORTED UGANDAN POWER. KENYAN CONSUMPTION HAS BEEN GROWING ABOUT 10PCT ANNUALLY BUT AVAILABLE POWER SUPPLY (DOMESTICALLY GENERATED PLUS IMPORTS) HAS RISEN ONLY 5-6PCT PER YEAR. UPON COMPLETION OF 118 MILLION-DOLLAR GITARU HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT ON TANA RIVER, SCHEDULED FOR 1978, KENYA WILL BE NEARLY SELF-SUFFICIENT IN ELECTRICAL POWER. MEANWHILE, ENGINEER BELIEVES COUNTRY CAN "SCRAPE BY" WITH THERMAL SUBSTITUTIONS, GIVEN NORMAL "HYDROLOGICAL YEARS". DRY SEASONS (JAN.-MARCH AND SEPT.-OCT.) ROUTINELY REDUCE KENYAN-GENERATED ELECTRICAL POWER BUT 1976 RAINFALL HAS BEEN ABNORMALLY LOW. A SECOND DRY YEAR COULD UPSET EAPL'S OPTIMISTIC CALCULATIONS ABOUT RIDING OUT UGANDAN POWER EMBARGO.

4. IF NECESSARY, EAPL WOULD FALL BACK ON ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES SUCH AS ASKING INDUSTRIAL USERS TO STAGGER LOADS OR REDUCE OVERALL CONSUMPTION. FACT THAT INDUSTRIAL CONSUMPTION IS CONCENTRATED IN 10-12 MAJOR FIRMS WOULD FACILITATE SUCH A PROGRAM. (COMMENT: SHOULD POWER INTERRUPTIONS CONTINUE OVER EXTENDED PERIOD, HOWEVER, A FEW LARGE PROJECTS COMING ON-STREAM IN THE LATE 1970'S COULD BE JEOPARDIZED. ONE, THE N-REN/GOK FERTILIZER PLANT INVESTMENT, EXPECTS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT CONSUMER OF ELECTRICAL POWER.) EAPL ALSO ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT OF GEOTHERMAL POWER IN RIFT VALLEY, WHICH HAS ALREADY PROVED TO BE AN ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE VENTURE. ENGINEER SAID GOK NOW SEARCHING FOR SOFT-TERM LOANS TO COVER PURCHASES OF CAPITAL EQUIPMENT.

5. EAPL ENGINEER INTERPRETED UGANDAN POWER INTERRUPTIONS AS POLITICAL RETALIATION WITH FLIMSY ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION. UGANDAN EXCUSE THAT LACK OF PETROLEUM SUPPLIES HAD AFFECTED OUTPUT AT OWEN'S FALLS WAS IRRELEVANT, IN HIS VIEW, SINCE ELECTRICITY WAS HYDRO-GENERATED. ONLY OIL PRODUCTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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USED AT PLANT ARE SUPPOSEDLY MACHINERY LUBRICANTS.

DECONTROL 7/26/78
MARSHALL

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